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(71) Applicant: PITNEY BOWES INC.  
Stamford Connecticut 06926-0700 (US)

(72) Inventors:

• Dolan, Donald T.  
Ridgefield, CT 06877 (US)

- French, Dale A.  
Clinton, CT 06413 (US)
- Lawton, Kathryn V.  
Branford, CT 06405 (US)

(74) Representative: Avery, Stephen John et al  
Hoffmann, Eitlie & Partner,  
Patent- und Rechtsanwälte,  
Arabellastrasse 4  
81925 München (DE)

(54) **Method and apparatus for securely authorizing performance of a function in a distributed system such as a postage meter**

(57) A method for authorizing performance of a function in a distributed system (1) having first (3) and second (5) subsystems in communication with each other includes the steps of separately generating a mutual session key within the first and second subsystems: utilizing the mutual session key generated in each

of the first and second subsystems (3, 5) for authenticating the first subsystem; and authorizing performance of the function only upon completion of the authenticating of step B). An apparatus performs the inventive method.

FIG. 1

